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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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R 031143Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7662
INFO USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEHRAN 3146

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, IR
SUBJ: LOW LEVEL VIOLENCE OVER HOLIDAY WEEKEND

REF: TEHRAN 03118

SUMMARY: OVER WEEKEND, LOW-LEVEL VIOLENCE OCCURED IN ABOUT 15 IRANIAN CITIES ACCORDING TO LOCAL PRESS SOURCES. BOMB THREATS (BEING REPORTED SEPTEL) MADE TO ONE TRAN HOTEL WHERE GRUMMAN EMPLOYEES STAY, ONE ISFAHAN HOTEL AND AMCONSULATE SHIRAZ. NO BOMBS FOUND. TWO RIOTERS WERE KILLED IN YAZD AND ONE TERRORIST DIED IN QAZVIN SHOOTOUT (PREVIOUSLY REPORTED REFTEL). SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS ARRESTED FOR ALLEGEDLY DISTRIBUTING ANTI-STATE PROPAGANDA. INCIDENTS NOT RPT NOT BELIEVED PART OF OVERALL PLAN BUT RESULT OF NUMEROUS SMALL GROUPS DECIDING TO TAKE MATTERS INTO THEIR OWN HANDS. MANY BECOMING MORE CONCERNED AS VIOLENCE CONTINUES, BUT THEIR REACTIONS VARY. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESS APRIL 1 AND APRIL 3 REPORT SERIES OF INCIDENTS INVOLVING LOW-LEVEL VIOLENCE--BREAKING BANK WINDOWS, ATTACKS ON GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, ATTEMPTS TO START FIRES--IN FIFTEEN IRANIAN CITIES. PRESS CHARACTERIZES CONFIDENTIAL

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SERIES OF EVENTS AN "OUTBURST OF VIOLENCE", BUT OVER-WHELMING MAJORITY OF INCIDENTS INVOLVED VERY SMALL GROUPS ON HIT-AND-RUN BASIS. (FULL ACCOUNT BEING POUCHED.) MAJOR EXCEPTION WAS YAZD WHERE TWO RIOTERS WERE KILLED WHEN POLICE OPENED FIRE ON CROWD TRYING TO BURN BANKS. POLICE FIRED AFTER TRYING TO BRING SCENE UNDER CONTROL WITH FIRE HOSES AND TEAR GAS, ACCORDING TO PARS NEWS

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2. SECOND EXCEPTION WAS MASHAD, WHERE 40 PEOPLE WERE ATTACKING BANKS AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS WHEN POLICE WADED IN, ARRESTED SIX AND DISPERSED THE REST. ONLY OTHER LARGE-SCALSE ACTION WAS AT MIANEH, WHERE 80 MASKED DEMONSTRATORS ATTACKED THE RAILWAY STATION FRIDAY MARCH 31 AND TRIED TO HALT A TRAIN WITH STICKS AND ROCKS. THERE WAS DAMAGE BUT NO CASUALTIES.

3. OTHER ATTACKS OCCURED AGAINST WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION BUILDINGS, GOVERNMENT OFFICES, BANKS AND MOVIE HOUSES IN NUMBER OF CITIES, INCLUDING ABADAN, AHWAZ, ISFAHAN, TEHRAN AND QOM. TEHRAN ACTIVITY WAS CONFINED TO MARCH 30-31, LOCATED MOSTLY IN SOUTH OF CITY. BY APRIL 2 SOUTH TEHRAN HAD RETURNED TO NORMAL FOR FINAL NEW YEAR'S HOLIDAY, SIEZDAH BEDAR. SHIRAZ, EXCEPT FOR INCIDENT REPORTED REFTEL, AND TABRIZ WERE QUIET.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEHRAN 3146

4. MARCH 30 AND 31 SAW BOMB THREATS AGAINST HOTEL IN TEHRAN WHICH HOUSES GRUMMAN EMPLOYEES AND LARGE ISFAHAN HOTEL. ON APRIL 1, AMCONSULATE SHIRAZ RECEIVED PHONE CALL IN EARLY EVENING WITH BOMB THREAT. IN ALL CASES, SEARCH WAS MADE, NO BOMBS WERE FOUND.

5. IRANIAN SECURITY AGENTS CARRIED OUT RAIDS IN TABRIZ MARCH 29, WHICH NETTED EIGHT PEOPLE ACCUSED OF DISTRI-BUTING SUBVERSIVE LITERATURE AND TWO OTHERS--MIRALI

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COLAMI SAPIDANI AND BAIRAM GURZAH--ON CHARGES OF SELLING CASSETTES CONTAINING SUBVERSIVE PROPAGANDA. CASSETTES REPORTEDLY CAME FROM QOM, ACCORDING TO SAPIDANI AND GURZAH. POLICE, NOT SECURITY SERVICE, ALSO ARRESTED THREE INDIVIDUALS IN ABADAN AND FOUR STUDENTS IN TEHRAN FOR DISTRIBUTING ANTI-STATE LEAFLETS.

6. WE UNDERSTAND FROM RELIABLE FOREIGN REPORTER WHO WAS PRESENT THAT SENIOR TEHRAN MULLAH GAVE TWO-HOUR SERMON MARCH 30 IN TEHRAN'S BAZAAR MOSQUE. SPEECH WAS DISTINCTLY ANTI-GOVERNMENT THOUGH SHAH NOT MENTIONED. USE OF AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI'S NAME BROUGHT LOUD CHEERS, HOWEVER, AS DID MENTION OF LOCAL RELIGIOUS LEADERS BY NAME. SITUATION CONFIDENTIAL

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WAS PEACEFUL THOUGH POLICE WERE PRESENT.

7. FULL ANALYSIS WOULD BE PREMATURE, BUT INITIAL ACCOUNTS SUGGEST EVENTS WERE NOT CENTRALLY DIRECTED (SENIOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS HAD CALLED FOR QUIET OBSERVANCE OF 40TH DAY COMMEMORATION OF TABRIZ RIOTS AT HOM) BUT WORK OF SMALLER GROUPS WHO DECIDED TO ACT ON THEIR OWN. AMATEURISH ORGANIZATION OF SEVERAL EVENTS AND CONCURRENT ARRESTS OF "SUBVERSIVE" GROUPS SUGGESTS MANY FOLK DECIDED TO GET INTO ACT. TWO VETERAN IRANIAN OBSERVERS OF DISSIDENT SCENE EXPRESSED SURPRISE AND DISMAY AT RESULTS OF WHAT ONE DESCRIBED AS SHAH'S "LET A HUNDRED FLOWERS BLOOM" CAMPAIGN AND OFFERED SAD REGRET THAT "SO MANY BLOSSOMS WERE COMING UP STINKWEED". ON OTHER HAND, NUMBER OF IRANIANS WHO MIGHT BE DESCRIBED AS PART OF "ESTABLISHMENT" BECOMING PESSIMISTICALLY CONCERNED THAT SHAH'S LIBERALIZATION COMING TO MEAN TACIT PERMISSION FOR VIOLENCE. OVER NEXT FEW WEEKS, THERE IS LIKELY TO BE SERIOUS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE REVIEW OF EVENTS OF RECENT PAST AND MUTED DEBATE OF WHERE IRAN SHOULD GO FROM HERE. AS OF NOW, IRANIAN OPINION IS SPLIT ON QUESTION OF ACCEPTING STATE OF AFFAIRS WHICH CONTINUES TO PRODUCE VIOLENT DISSIDENCE.

7. DESPITE ADDITIONAL BOMB THREATS, IT DOES NOT RPT NOT APPEAR THAT DISSIDENT MOVEMENT IS TURNING TOWARD SHARPLY INCREASED XENOPHOBIA.
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